

## **Blue Mound State Park Draft Master Plan Amendment Public Hearing**

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Blue Mound State Park Draft Master Plan Amendment Public Hearing

Date: December 1, 2015

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Location: Mount Horeb, Wisconsin

**CHRIS MADISON:** Ground rules so that everybody is on the same page. This is, as Paul Zajackowski said, this is your opportunity to provide testimony for the hearing. It's not a question and answer hearing. So I have the slips for everyone that's filled out if they want to speak. If you have not filled one of these slips out and you'd like to speak, you can go up to the front table and fill out one of them, and they'll get it to me. We're going in the order that you submitted them. Each person will have three minutes to speak. We have a timer here that will go, and at 30 seconds this sheet will come up. You'll see you have 30 seconds.

At that point, if the 30 seconds is up, this timer will beep, and that's the end of your speaking time. Make sure that for those who are listening that there's not cheering or clapping or jeering. This is being recorded for the record, and people's comments may not be able to be heard at that point. Also, please keep it civil and courteous. And as Jeff said, you have until December 16<sup>th</sup> to provide any written comments in addition to or in lieu of these comments. So the first speaker will be Darek Faber. And ahead of time, I apologize if I get your names wrong. And on that, it looks like Peter Walton will be the second speaker.

**DAREK FABER:** You did good. It's Darek Faber. Thank you.

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**CHRIS MADISON:** What's that?

**DAREK FABER:** You did good. It's Darek Faber.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Okay.

**DAREK FABER:** You did good. So I just want to make mention that I've been in Mount Horeb about eight years. I have enjoyed the Blue Mound State Park trails for a couple years now, avid fat biker, mountain biker, enjoy the trails, fantastic, and just want to thank the DNR for doing their work and keeping everything up to snuff and to core. You're doing a great job. My only concern tonight is why the proposal includes closing the Overlode Trail. That's a very scenic trail. In my mind, it's very annalistic. I can think of several times that I've been on the trail, and usually by myself or with another rider, that there's wildlife present. We usually let them cross.

It's a minimalistic trail. It's probably no wider than this piece of paper. So if it's wildlife that we're trying to preserve, I'm not sure that removing that section of trail is going to help. If it is a migratory issue, I would ask that would you consider keeping that trail closed for that migratory season seeing as how that most of the time the mountain bike trails are closed when it's wet or they're muddy or if they're in thaw. And I'm pretty sure that most mountain bikers would agree that we try to respect those conditions as well. So instead of just obliterating that trail altogether, which would be very disappointing, it's a fantastic trail system, would you consider some alternatives for keeping that closed for migratory species? Thank you.

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**CHRIS MADISON:** Thank you. Peter Walton.

**PETER WALTON:** Yes.

**CHRIS MADISON:** And the next speaker will be John Barnes.

**PETER WALTON:** Good evening. I, like he said, I'm Peter Walton. I'm a resident of Mount Horeb, business owner, huge mountain biker fan and also a member of CORP Mountain Bike Club. CORP, and there's our treasurer that just walked in, CORP stands for Capital Off Road Pathfinders, and we're a Dane County, Dane County Mountain, everybody all right?

**CHRIS MADISON:** It's not your time yet.

**JEFF PREY:** No, that's not right. Keep on going.

**DIANE BRUSOE:** You're good.

**PETER WALTON:** Three minutes went really fast.

**JEFF PREY:** Sorry about that.

**PETER WALTON:** No, you just [inaudible], that was . . .

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**DIANE BRUSOE:** Three minutes, right.

**PETER WALTON:** All right. I'll start over. You guys get to hear more of me now. What our club does is there is CamRock, Quarry Ridge, Seminole, Blue Mound mountain bike trails in Dane County that our club takes care of throughout the year. We, a friend of mine, Jay, that's here, and Brian and Darek, there's a few of others of us, we actually snowshoe at the snowfall so then we can, us fat bikers can get out there, because we really enjoy Blue Mounds because it's covering the rocks. It can scare the hell out of me, and I don't know that they're there.

But I'm here tonight because of the disappointment of removing four miles of Overlode. For cost reasons, it costs \$25,000 a square mile to do a mountain bike trail. If you take away 4 miles, that's \$100,000. I heard that to do the snowmobile, it's \$100,000 or \$108,000, approximately. Who is going to help us to finish Pokerville, and who is going to help us finish into Brigham Park? The other thing is on this plan, we see that you're moving Overlode. You're taking away more than just Overlode. You're actually putting one trail that we can't continue to go on, but we have to come back on the double track. Disappointing there. It is probably the prettiest part and not most technical, but its awesome ridges and the switchbacks are awesome.

There are some erosion issues. Walt, our trail steward, has done an awesome job and has been trying to work with the DNR on correcting and rerouting some of those trails. He's been working on that for five years. There's been nothing done. I really hope you reconsider closing that when we're concerned about loop(er?) in the back, and that study was based out of a study on a park from Chicago where three and a half million visitors come. You saw up there, we have 172,000. That's not really distinct. I sell insurance. If I had those kinds of numbers, I'd lose my

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job. So when you do tests like that, it's got to be closer and more defined and actually comparable.

But on behalf of CORP, the mountain bike club, it brings a lot of economic to the community. When we do that fat bike in the winter, people have been coming from all across the state, and I know that because I'm out there, and they say it's very well done. So please reconsider. Do not close Overlode. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Thank you. And John Barnes, and next will be Gary Schweisthal.

**JOHN BARNES:** Okay. I've been a resident of this area for 40-some years. Blue Mounds was a natural place to go and a place where nature was important. We bring in machines and [inaudible] in the winter, we're [inaudible] failing out there. I've been ordinarily a cross-country skier for years down [inaudible] trail. The trails are excellent here. Blue Mounds is a unique spot for cross-country skiers as well as mountain bikers and hikers and others. They're interested in silent sports. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about keeping nature natural.

And I think encouragements for them to do that whole situation are definitely way out of line. So they've always had 25,000 miles of trails in the state. How many miles do we have? Do the math. I think we deserve to have some protected areas, some areas where machines are not allowed, where noise and air pollution are recognized as a problem and where the athletic community can use their own lands to do their work. And this is the way it has been, but our [inaudible] are about to change.

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Other alterations of the trails, I think, have [inaudible], causing the, I'll call it machine lobby here. The trails themselves, I believe, have served us well. There are some small blisters here and there that could be improved without going throughout nature changing them, grating and diminishing the ground, which ultimately destroys that as well, the wildlife. So I think that's a disruptive problem for wildlife as well as the [inaudible], the people that want to experience a little nature in the quiet. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Thank you. Gary Schweisthal. Next is Jason Dorgan.

**GARY SCHWEISTHAL:** Hi. My name is Gary. I've been a CORP member and an advocate for mountain biking since 2002. I've been involved at Blue Mounds since then. I just have some comments about the proposed closure of Overlode. I'm going to try to keep it under the time for my [inaudible].

**MAN:** [Inaudible] got time for [inaudible].

**GARY SCHWEISTHAL:** So in addition to what others have said, the majority of our original proposal where we had some improvements in mountain bike trails elsewhere in the park that were adopted within the draft amendment, we were kind of blindsided by the proposed closure of Overlode, and we weren't really given, you know, any, really any good reason. I mean, the ecological reasons don't really make much sense to us.

You know, the trail is a foot and a half wide. We just ask that instead of closing the trail, we just be allowed to, you know, make some needed improvements and realignments and submit

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those for approval. Obviously, we prefer that Overlode remain as is. And we assume that those, you know, will be [inaudible] written comments, and we just ask that our supporters would write in favor of our proposal and support us in the back. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Jason Dorgan. Tim White will be next.

**JASON DORGAN:** Hello. I'm Jason Dorgan, and I live in Blue Mounds. I use the park a lot, because I only live about a half mile from it. I go to run there, and I do love Overlode. It's a great trail for running in the winter and the summer, snowshoeing. I do understand how processes work though, and I know the DNR. I appreciate your efforts in this difficult process. One concern is a master plan is done so infrequently, and once this is approved by the Natural Resource Board, it's kind of locked in stone, and it's difficult to do this whole process again. It costs a lot of money.

I guess my recommendation, a couple, is that if Overlode is closed that in the plan there is some reevaluation period that happens maybe every two years or three years to see if we're successful. I mean, if we're not being successful, and we're just hurting us, ourselves by closing the Overlode, I don't want to have to do a whole new master plan just to get it reopened. It seems like a lot of work. Also, the master plan seems to limit us to the mileage, so the way it's written right now, with something like 88 miles, if you want to reopen Overlode, you wouldn't be able to because the mile limit is set. So I'd like some flexibility in the mileage of trail that are in the master plan so that it's not locked in stone.

So the right use would just say there's 93 miles maybe so Overlode could be reopened in some manner without redoing the master plan. And then I do have a little concern. I don't mind

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the snowmobile trail. I understand their needs and everything we've talked about, but speed-wise I was concerned when I heard they might be going very fast right where I'm going to be crossing when I'm running, skiing, or what have you. So I propose to have some speed limits within the park. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Tim White.

**TIM WHITE:** Hello. Tim White from Springdale Township. We've been skiing out at Blue Mound State Park since we moved to Sun Prairie years ago. It's a wonderful trail system, and if you go to other parks in the state, if you ski in other areas, if you tell them that you're from this area, Blue Mounds always comes up as being a marvelous ski area. And they're in awe that we have this, can keep the snow as well as we can, and the growing is wonderful. I see the snowmobile trail as being a real detriment to that pride that we take in this park. A lot of times different use is not compatible, and this is one of those times.

When we're out skiing, we're out skiing because of the quiet, because of the solitude, because of the exercise, and because of the fresh air. And when we come around that bend and get back up on Pleasure Valley, that changes a little because of the snowmobiles. All of a sudden the air isn't as fresh, it's not as quiet, and the reason that we're even out has been compromised. I can ski next to a snowmobile trail, and a snowmobile can come by, and I doubt if they even know I'm there. It's, I'm not really infringing on them, I guess.

But in this case, it completely changes the reason we're out there, and it changes our, you know, what we love about it. And it's been quite a few years since the snowmobiles have vacated Blue Mound State Park. And in those years, a marvelous community has grown up, a



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community of likeminded folks that think that there's still a place for silence in the world. In our rush to get here and there, we lose track of ourselves, and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing is a way to get that back. And I think it's really important, and I'm really disappointed in the master plan's inclusion of the snowmobiles so close to the ski area.

And the other thing I was going to bring up was nighttime. I don't know too many cross-country skiers that ski at night, although [inaudible] under full moons. But the snowmobilers will have free range at night and are apt to get off the trail a little bit. And then as far as moving our trail downhill, I think that's a real kick in the teeth. So thank you for the hearing, and I hope that this can be resolved.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Perfecting timing. Next speaker is Rob Frye. If I could remind people to have your cell phones turned off for the courtesy of the other speakers and to, for the speakers to address the Board up here.

**ROB FRYE:** Rob Frye from Cross Plains, Wisconsin. I am representing Northern Forests [inaudible]. We currently own 5,500 acres in the state, which is open to the public. We have the Ice Age Trail going across 660 acres of our land. All of our property is open to the public for mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and all of our property is open to snowmobiles, every piece of property we have. It's not all together. We might have a small spot [inaudible], some as big as 800 acres.

So growing up, I always believed, or I was taught, the land belongs to everybody. I was taught as an owner to share with the Wisconsin community. And I think the local snowmobilers

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here in the southern part of the state are just asking for the same thing as what I was brought up to be. I'm just a steward of the land, but I'm more than happy to share with you folks. The end.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Thank you. Moving to Sam Landes, and next will be Karl Heil.

**SAM LANDES:** Hi. My name is Sam Landes. I represent the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs and the local snowmobilers. And basically, we're fine with the preferred alternative. As long as we can connect up on the northern end, we're okay with it. It gets us a bit off the road on the central part, and we're good with it. We think it's a reasonable alternative. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Thank you. Karl Heil, and John Sauer will be up.

**KARL HEIL:** Okay. I'm going to read and talk fast. My name is Karl Heil. I live in the Town of Brigham. I've worked at Blue Mound State Park for 30 years, from 1981 through 2011. I'm still a current park user. As a park user, I am a member of the Friends of Blue Mound State Park. I'm on the advisory committee, and I also volunteer at the park. I'm familiar with the terrain, the soils, the drainage, the user base. My position is I'm opposed to the construction of the new multiuse trail and snowmobile route corridor, and I oppose the closure of the southeast portion of the Overlode Trail, the reasons being the multiuse trail, which is proposed to be a limestone screen bike path from Military Ridge to Blue Mound State Park, is not needed despite the DNR's assertions.

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In my 30 years with the Department, no one every requested a trail from the Village up. We already have a paved trail from the Military Ridge Trail up to the campground. I talked to the Town and Village, Town of Brigham clerk yesterday and the Village of Blue Mounds clerk today. Neither of them had any public ever come and say we need another route up to the park. I think that this limestone screen path is merely a smoke screen to put it in for a small [inaudible]. It's not sustainable. It is going to wash out to the limestone screen path.

The Village ball diamond is about a 1% slope. Every time it rains, it washes. We're proposing slopes like this, and if we're going to have this trail, it's not going to be sustainable as a limestone screen base. It's either going to have to be paved, which the snowmobilers don't like, adding pavement to the south-facing slope, even on the level parts. I took pictures. I invited Paul today, but he didn't get there in time. There's standing water everywhere. There are drainage issues. This area is all clay, [inaudible] water table. It's easy to draw a picture. It's different to be working on the ground there.

I also think it's an unneeded expense. The DNR cost [inaudible] for this eight-foot-wide trail section is \$185,000 for clearing and surfacing. The cost available for, cost estimate for the snowmobile section is not, we don't know. But this is a time when the parks are supposed to be self-supporting. We're raising sticker fees, camping fees, electric fees. You know, we're constructing a \$200,000-plus trail. It's not needed. It is unsustainable. If I was a snowmobiler or a silence course user, I would be opposed to this waste of my tax dollars. There are also non-monetary processes, the destruction of the landscape, the bulldozing of trees.

The Department identifies its Pleasure Valley forest as a sensitive but is a primary [inaudible] that's of high ecological importance, so in fact we're closing [inaudible] said portions of the Overlode Trail, yet, on the other hand, in the same area designated as a primary site we're

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bulldozing an eight-foot-wide, eight-foot-plus corridor. And I just don't buy that. Again, I just think it's another smokescreen. You know, we're proposing overall to pretend we're protecting the environment, but on the other side of the park, I think it doesn't matter, because we're running a snowmobile trail through there. Earlier's proposal, the DNR proposes to run a snowmobile trail through Pleasure Valley. Now suddenly Pleasure Valley is too sensitive [inaudible] because of their public outcry.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Karl, your time is up.

**KARL HEIL:** It makes you wonder how much real study is the Department putting into this issue.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Karl, we need to be considerate of everyone else who needs to speak here. Three minutes has passed.

**KARL HEIL:** It passed? Okay. I, that went fast.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Thank you.

**KARL HEIL:** Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** John Sauer.

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**MAN:** Okay. Keep bringing [inaudible].

**JOHN SAUER:** Hello. I'm John Sauer. I live in Sauk City. I'm not a public speaker, but I'll do the best I can here. When I come to Blue Mounds generally in the summertime, I use a little bit [inaudible]. I walk there. To me, I like Overlode because it's a primitive trail. It's the best part of the park. I like that it's got solitude, it's mature trees, it's probably the least impacted by just the numbers of volumes of people. I like that I can see pileated woodpeckers, scarlet tanagers, deer, turkeys as much as I see people out there. I like that it gives me a practically non-impactful access to that best part of the park.

It seems to me that primitive trails like this, little skinny trails, are better in preserving an environment like that as opposed to [inaudible] more people are walking willy-nilly without a programmed pattern. It seems to me that we are less likely to spread the [inaudible] on narrow corridor trails than if we're just wandering [inaudible]. It seems to me that while I should be able to adapt to our movements better [inaudible]. I understand that this trail is volunteer. It was funded, built, and is maintained by volunteers.

It seems to me that the future of our public land managements need these types of volunteer groups [inaudible] I have in the Sauk Prairie rec area as it comes up. I think it's the future how we work with public lands. Now I'm not forest ecologist. I'm not an ornithologist. I'm an arborist that loves being out in the woods. I didn't stay in a Holiday Inn Express last night. But it does seem counterintuitive to me to shut down a quality trail like this that's, it flies in the faces of those that [inaudible] if there isn't really, really, really solid science forcing it closed. Thank you.

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**CHRIS MADISON:** I believe it's Tim Lin or Lins, and Laurence Meade will be next.

**TIM LINS:** I want to thank you for letting me speak here tonight. My name is Tim Lins. I am the director of the Association of Sauk County Snowmobile Clubs. I am also the president of the Plain Hillcrest Riders Snowmobile Club, and I'm also a volunteer who has been busy brushing and siting trails these last few weeks like a lot of other people in this room.

I am here to support the proposed snowmobile trail through the Blue Mound State Park. I consider it part of the regional trail system that will connect with the Great Sauk Trail, which I've been involved with, Sauk Prairie Recreational Area, and on through to Devil's Lake State Park and out onto the 400 Trail. So with that being said, you know, I just want to thank you for your consideration, and that was my two cents' worth. Thank you very much.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Laurence Meade.

**LAURENCE MEADE:** Hi. I'm Laurence Meade, and I live in Madison. My wife and I have enjoyed camping in Blue Mounds, hiking, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking. I just want to reiterate what others have said. I'm also a member of CORP. I just want to reiterate what others from CORP have said about closing Overlode. I think it would be a real loss for mountain biking, also hiking.

My wife and I were hiking out there on Overlode Sunday, and it does need some attention, but we've got a great volunteer group that I think is very eager to make improvements and to maintain that trail. I'd like to think that snowmobiles could be compatible as a multiuse experience. It's not my activity, but I can understand how people who want peace, quiet, and

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clean air would object to the snowmobiles coming through an area like Pleasant Valley.

Anyway, thank you for having this hearing, and I hope it works out well for everyone.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Walt Hougas. Walt? And Pat Helmenstine is next.

**WALTER HOUGAS:** My name is Walter Hougas. I am a trail steward for the mountain bike trails at Blue Mound State Park, board member of Capital Off Road Pathfinders, board member, Friends of Blue Mound State Park. I'm opposed to closing the Overlode Trail. I find that the arguments that the DNR is using to justify closing the trail don't really hold water. In their rapid ecological assessment, they cite two papers that, stating that recreational trails cause predatory birds to move into interior forest areas and prey on the nests of songbirds. And when I read those papers, I thought this is horrible. I feel sick to my stomach if this is happening because of something I've done.

Then I started looking at it more carefully, and the papers were talking about trails that were in major [inaudible], Boulder, Colorado, and Chicago, Illinois. One of the parks, the one in Boulder, gets three and a half million visitors a year. I don't think that the papers describe the situation at Blue Mound. I don't think that that's what's going on. The problem I have with this, what's being proposed is the DNR doesn't have any means of measuring success here that I'm aware of. I could be wrong about this. Like I haven't seen anything in what they've written that leads me to believe that we'll know in a year or two whether this trail closure accomplished anything. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Pat Helmenstine.

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**PAT HELMENSTINE:** Good evening. My name is Pat. I guess I'm going to say I'm one of the dreamers that tried to get the trail reopened from Black Earth to Blue Mounds. In doing that, I talked to a lot of landowners up through the valley of Vermont trying to reopen the old trail. They got to this point, and they say, why can't you go through? And my thought was we have to open up the master book to do so. Two years ago, I'd say, year and a half, me and some other folks at the DNR did a walkthrough down at the valley in which it was a, then that it would be a multiuse trail.

Then I thought to myself, this is going to cost way too much to go down through here to make it a multiuse trail. In the last year, we've gotten together with other folks, Friends of Blue Mounds, and the snowmobile clubs. Is there anywhere else we could go? Yet, it's off the road. It's a safety thing. There's cars parked on the side of the road to walk, cross-country ski, which is part of the, quote, snowmobile trail right now. That is why I proved this trail here is off the road. The multi-trail that is here will be best for all parties. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** I apologize. I can, I'm not really sure. This one I think is Steven Ekenberg. And Dave Boyer is next.

**STEVEN EKENBERG:** My name is Steve Ekenberg. I'm been using the park for some 30-plus years. It's common sense to just preserve the state park as a state park and not destroy the ecosystem of it. It's been kind of my dream through the years, so it's kind of startling if a big snowmobile is coming through [inaudible] for the quiet sports people. I predominantly ski at night because I work during the day. The multiuse trail is just a hazard waiting to happen. It's



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like it's up to the snowmobiler to identify me. I can't identify the snowmobile. I mean, it's just an accident waiting to happen. Thanks.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Dave Boyer, Bayer.

**DAVE BOYER:** My name is Dave Boyer. I'm a member of the County Line Sno Busters. I'm also the general manager of Rookies Food & Spirits in the Town of Mazomanie. We are sponsors of the County Line Sno Busters, also the CP Riders and the Speedway Snowmobile Club. Our business is seasonal. We are slower in wintertime. The snowmobilers [inaudible] help us immensely, and it's not just the business owner that makes money on that.

When we're busy, our bartenders, our servers, our cooks, our dishwashers are all working at their shifts. They're making more money that they're spending in the community. We are averaging, I believe it's about five days a year that the snowmobile trail is open. Last year it was zero. Four or 5 years ago it was 20 or 22 days. That year was a good year for us, a good year for our staff. I'd just like to say that if that trail opens, that gives people on Military Ridge Trail more access to the Black Earth area, helps the businesses up there. Thank you very much.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Ilene Helmenstine. And Patricia Kapinos is next.

**ILENE HELMENSTINE:** My name is Ilene Helmenstine. I am actually the wife of the trail master for the County Line Sno Busters. But most of the people that know me wouldn't probably [inaudible] because I'm not an avid snowmobiler. However, I understand after growing up for seven years next to the state park of Blue Mounds. We use that as a family for swimming,

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camping, family gatherings. I remember biking up there when my mom couldn't drive us up there. I remember my dad, when he was farming, that after they were done, they would get on the snowmobile and then take a ride, and they'd be able to go up through the park at that time.

It's memories like that that I want my kids to be able to experience, not necessarily just the snowmobiling, everything. But I find it very hard to believe that we are spending time and energy arguing about how to share a piece of property that we are very fortunate in the state of Wisconsin and in Dane County to actually have. It doesn't belong to any one of us personally. It is there for us to all use. The snowmobile club is asking for a mere 1.4 miles compared to the 77 miles that are in that park now to be used for other uses. I understand people feel that snowmobiling is very rough, fast, whatever.

I can guarantee you when I go out for a ride with my husband, speed is not involved. We spend a great deal of time taking in the scenery, looking at the new snow that's fallen on the trees. We stop, look. We take our time going from place to place. That is not everybody. I understand that. So I'm not going to say that we are [inaudible], but I am telling you that I don't want to categorize anybody else in their relaxations that they do, and I don't want you to categorize me in what I enjoy to do.

So I'm asking if you please accept this so that those that are out there snowmobiling have that safety feature, because I've travelled on that road trying to get to one place to the other, and it is scary. It's probably much like your cross-country skier [inaudible] cross-country, and that snowmobile comes by. Well, it's like that on a snowmobile when all [inaudible] was flying by on the road as well. Okay? Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Patricia Kapinos. Garrett Krueger is up next.

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**PATRICIA KAPINOS:** Hey, guys. Mountain biker, love it, love the park. The park is awesome. Here's the deal. Overlode Trail was built by a \$10,000 grant from REI and hell of a lot of volunteer hours. I, myself, volunteer so much time at this park. These guys sitting in the back, it's, they'd input over 400 hours of volunteer work every year, so we've done a lot [inaudible] on this trail. Suddenly, the trail is, ooh, there's a bird that's been magically discovered by some racket ecology study, which has some really shiny sides, not going to lie.

Let's take a look at this and understand that maybe, A, there needs to be more scientific research on this, B, we need to understand why suddenly the trail is going to be closed. Who made that decision? The public [inaudible] that happened last time had over 150 counts in support of sustaining, improving, expanding mountain biking trail. And the [inaudible] that is proposed is let's close down the mountain biking trail? Are you guys even listening to the public, because it really seems like the amendment process, somebody goes away.

Snowmobilers, I really don't know anything about it. Don't really care. Sounds great, doesn't sound great. I don't ski. [Inaudible], although it does seem a little scary when a snowmobiler [inaudible] same area. I'd like to not die. But my main point here is that the mountain biking community has done a lot. It's not just mountain bikers on the trail. It's hikers. It's people that look at birds. It's snowshoers. It's anybody that goes out there. And I don't, I just don't understand how suddenly you decide to close a trail and say [inaudible] there's no plan.

You say, okay, well, we're going to close this, but we'll let you open it up over here. There's no plan to actually pay for that. Who's paying for that? Is it going to be us, because we already paid for it to be built over there, and then suddenly it's, oh, hey, too bad. I mean, how did that even happen? What, where did that come in? Why was the trail built before, and how

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did you even know that the bird in the back was even disturbed by the trail? There's no science behind it. Really, the studies are ridiculous.

There's other studies that are out there that aren't even quoted that are drastic, show mountain biking trails having nothing. They don't disturb migratory bird patterns. Why aren't those even addressed in the DNR comments? There is nothing about that. So, you know, you look at a group of people that have invested so much time and energy in this park, as many other people have, the cross-country skier, the snowmobilers obviously want to do this. I don't understand how it's all of a sudden we can't do this, this trail is bad, but we're going to do it in another place.

And I just feel that this proposal is ridiculous. I feel that it goes against everything that public comments have established. And I feel like the DNR, I don't even know how you guys came up with this, honestly. I really think you need to review this, and you need to, you know, stop this amendment process and not let any of this go through. And I hope that everybody else supports that.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Garret Krueger. And Brock Woods will be next.

**GARRETT KRUEGER:** Hello. My name is Garrett Krueger. I just want to talk real quick about the Overlode closure. I am a mountain biker in the summer and a fat biker in the winter. Fat bikers do not [inaudible]. Anyway, I would hope that, you know, we could maybe reach some type of compromise with that, perhaps a reroute or something as opposed to a complete trail closure. If you look at what happens to the trails of the system, when you close that section, basically, it looks like two trails dead end with no more single track options. And I fear that if

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that does happen that the volunteer hours that go into these trails will decrease because this is [inaudible] right now, and [inaudible] Pokerville now where it just kind of dead ends.

And so closing that one section creates not one but two dead ends. Other than that, on the positives, I'm very happy with the Pokerville continuation where it is a loop, you know, so the talks with Brigham, I think those are very positive things. I'm also concerned about, that there is a cap put on the trails. If reroutes need to happen, if it's .1 miles more, are we going to run into opposition? And also I would like the master plan to be able to have amendments perhaps more easily and not once every ten years. It seems odd that we can elect a president every four years, but a trail plan has to be every ten years. That's all I have. Thanks.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Brock Woods. I believe Scott Foote is next.

**BROCK WOODS:** My name is Brock Woods. I am here representing both myself and the Madison Nordic Ski Club in Madison, so I have brief comments for each. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I apologize that we haven't fully [inaudible], and we need to do that. We'll probably, the Club will probably submit written comments later. I do have a statement for the Club to read. At the present time, the Club is in favor of whatever step or steps result in retaining as much as possible the current safe and quiet atmosphere, clean air, quality cross-country ski trails, and wildlife existence and viewing that we all currently enjoy while skiing.

The Club is not necessarily opposed to snowmobilers traversing the park as long as such use or its effects on the park qualities mentioned above are minimized. So, again, a fairly brief statement for them. Speaking for myself, you know, back to the Club, I'm a board member of the Club. I'm chair of the Club's Trails Committee. We've worked with many of the state parks

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in trying to improve cross-country ski trail quality, and that is our primary concern as a club.

Speaking for myself, I am opposed to snowmobiles going through the park. They have thousands of miles of trails. We have many, many, many fewer.

This one park is used by incredible numbers of skiers. It's the one park in Dane County, a state park, that is constantly referred to as the best classic skiing that there is to be had. It often has much better snow than any other park in the area given its altitude, not much above Madison but just enough. So I'm opposed to snowmobiles being allowed through the park. And if snowmobiles are to be allowed in the park, I would suggest, as some of us have, that the plan retain flexibility to see how things go this winter and have the ability to be changed to alleviate that trail in the future if need be so reevaluate in the summer.

My concerns are safety, the reallocation of route for the cross-country skiers coming from Pleasure Valley. It'll push the cross-country ski route, as far as I can tell from your map, entirely out into the unprotected, windblown top of the hill, and that will certainly compromise the quality of their ski routes. Training difficulties and the cost involved are just not supported, so I guess that's all I have to say. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Scott Foote. Next, Kenneth Wade.

**SCOTT FOOTE:** Thank you for taking the time to do this for us. I am an outdoorsman. I am involved in a lot of sports, and I just want to say that the park has been a history to me. I busted my front teeth on the Holy Schist Trail, and I do snowmobile, but I think what the snowmobilers are asking for is a small portion. If you look at Governor Dodge, the John Muir Trail in Southern Kettle over at Devil's Lake, everybody was, who can use the same trails as they do, so I

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don't oppose to them using this trail, but I do not understand why you would want to close the Overlode Trail.

If you look at this park, people come here outside of Dane County or Iowa County to come here to camp. Our kids are stuck playing video games. This is one of the best parks I know in the county. You can camp, swim, take your kids either walking or on a mountain biking trail where you can cover a lot of ground and see a lot of wildlife on a very, very unique trail. I do not agree with the assessment of your studies on closing the trail, and I uphold that this park, it stands mountain biking, because that's what our kids need, and it helps all of us as parents teaching our kids about nature. So please keep that Overlode Trail open and expand it for all of us. Thanks.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Kenneth Wade. And next, it would be Doug Schorr.

**KENNETH WADE:** Hi. I'm Kenneth Wade. I'm a long-time resident of Pleasure Valley that I've lived in off and on since 1980 and also helped manage conservation areas within the Pleasure Valley area. I want to register my opposition to increase snowmobile use in the park. I think the existing snowmobile use using the Military Ridge Trail is sufficient. What's really important that's not recognized in the evaluation that the DNR did was the new proposed snowmobile trail as significant along, on all the juxtaposition of that trail with the silent sport trail routes in the Pleasure Valley loop area.

And that is much important in the acoustic study that, with that similar nature of more vehicle use and more vehicle noise and snowmobile noise is skewed that it compares the use at points right next to the road and finds them similar. What really has to be understood here is that

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the acoustic study is limited in that it didn't fully evaluate the type of noise that's produced through snowmobiles and mechanized traffic. And what's important to realize is that the evaluation of noise impacts the snowmobiles in a sensitive outdoor area such as used by the DNR, and they used the A-rated average, decibel average, for their sound instruments.

Those aren't sufficient to describe the noise through snow machines where audibility and longer distances and the most frequency tonal peaks are of concern, and I'll provide a reference for that. And the quote I have from the study on the National Park Survey was [inaudible] to include that the audibility of the snow machine activity must be evaluated in the context of the natural soundscape where the most effective visitor experiences include those that involve solitude, tranquility, and a contemplation of nature and natural processes.

And Blue Mounds is a [inaudible] for [inaudible] for activities, and this is incompatible to increase the mechanized traffic through here, especially in groups of snow machines. Not only do we have a longer period and duration of the sound packs, you'll get multiplication at additional levels and intensity in the sound. And then in addition, the Pleasure Valley sensitive area that's been talked about and the abandonment of Overlode, the citation and ecological assessment indicates the problem with that is the internal edge effect that allows predatory birds into the area. Overlode Trail does not have that, but please note that the snowmobile extension does, and the snowmobile extension in the Pleasure Valley area is much larger and has a much larger degree, but it's variances did not apply that to the snowmobile extension. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Doug Schorr. And Frank Hassler will be up next.



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**DOUG SCHORR:** Hi. I live in the Town of Verona. I use the park for skiing and for mountain biking and for hiking. I don't really have a real beef with the snowmobile trail at this point. I am here to talk about the Overlode Trail being closed. We've used it for hiking, for biking. It's a pretty unique place throughout, there's no place like that in that whole park. In fact, for anybody who's hiked around there in the fall, you've probably never been any place like that in all Southern Wisconsin. So there aren't a lot of places available for people who hike and mountain bike around here. There's very limited opportunities.

That's probably one of the nicest places there is. And I'm not quite sure, I don't know about the biology about why you're considering closing it, but it just seems like it's a pretty, I don't know if the DNR appreciates [inaudible] that trail, as do a lot of people. If you've been in the trail and tried to bike on the trail in the fall when there's leaves on the ground, and you can't even, you can't tell where the trail is. So I don't know, I've heard people talk about that, ways for rafters and things like that, but I find it pretty hard to imagine that that trail is even visible unless there's no leaves and no snow on the trail that would have any effect on that.

Again, we have very limited opportunities for hiking and biking around here. That's kind of all I had to say. I just think that you need to maybe put a little more weight on what everybody is saying here tonight about how important that is for the mountain bikers and hikers. I think if the mountain bikers and the hikers had a little more clout, I don't think you'd be considering closing it, but, again, it's one of the only places around like it, so that's it.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Frank Hassler. I think John Humphries will be up next.

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**FRANK HASSLER:** Hello. I come here this evening wearing two different hats. The first hat is as an outdoor enthusiast and a CORP member. I'm an avid mountain biker. I can tell you that the trail, the mountain bike trail system at Blue Mounds is really of national caliber. It's a very unique site due to the geology, geography of the park. And in particular, the Overlode Trail is a big part of what makes Blue Mounds such a great ride. It is really not something that can be replaced. The Overlode Trail has roughly 1,000 feet of climbing per transit.

And you can't, there's not a lot of opportunities here at that sort of elevation gain in Wisconsin making it a really unique and great trail. Certainly, we're excited to see the potential for expanding and finishing the Pokerville Trail, but Pokerville can't replace Overlode in that it lacks that topography. The other hat I'm going to wear today is that of an ecologist. I'm the owner of Good Oak Ecological Services. I am an ecological land manager for lack of a better term. And a lot of what I do is trying to learn about the history of sites and the ecological history and the health of natural communities.

So I took the concerns about fragmentation, habitat loss to heart. Of course, the [inaudible] nest parasitism issue in, through forest interior bird nesting is a well-known regional issue. It's a significant issue that causes these forest bird populations to decrease. But in my opinion, I don't believe that a small single track trail like Overlode can have any real significant impact on fragmenting Pleasure Valley woods. Furthermore, I don't believe the DNR has presented significant evidence to suggest that it has [inaudible] by others, and papers that were referenced within the rapid ecological assessment are not really relevant to the type of trail and the amount of traffic that the Overlode Trail gets.

I'd be very curious if the DNR has numbers for a number of trail users that use that trail. What makes that trail so special is that it is quiet, and it's, there is solitude out there. You get ten

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minutes in the trail, and you feel like you're lost a long way out in the woods, which is a very good feeling. And to lose that trail and to lose that aspect of the park would be a tragedy. I would further criticize the REA ecological assessment, and they state that the Pleasure Valley woods is a magic forest.

It is, in fact, a degraded oak woodland or a degraded oak opening that has been degraded by acidification(?). If you look at the original surveyor's notes from [inaudible], you will see that they did not run into a single elm, maple, walnut, basswood, or any sort of tree anywhere in the vicinity of the park. And in fact, the only trees they noted along the north edge of the Pleasure Valley woods there was wide open [inaudible]. They did not interject a single tree in a mile. The signs changed greatly over time. It was not originally forest interior habitat, and we, and it's only been so in the last few years. We should not be managing for birds that don't belong in that area. I could go on, but I'm happy to talk [inaudible].

**CHRIS MADISON:** John Humphries and Jim Bolton.

**JOHN HUMPHRIES:** My name is John Humphries. I live here in Mount Horeb, and I think if there is one thing we can all agree on, it's let it snow, right?

**WOMAN:** Yeah.

**MAN:** Yes.

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**JOHN HUMPHRIES:** All right. Let's hear it. I understand folks who like to ride fast snowmobiles. I grew up with them. And my job in high school and college was to deliver Polaris snowmobiles and four-wheelers for a distributor out of Menomonee Falls. I owe a lot to the RL Ryerson Company and to Polaris Incorporated, and I know that snowmobile clubs add a lot to our local communities. About five years ago I took up cross-country skiing, and I know that the Blue Mound State Park has done a lot for our area with a lot of people enjoying the park and kids learning to ski out there.

The Blue Mound Nordic Club has done a lot to teach kids to ski, and it's just a neat organization. Blue Mound Nordic has a little racing crew that my son actually participated in that. They practice after school hours, and one of the things that I'm concerned about is the safety of the proposed trail. So I think it's important that we share the park. We're all taxpayers, and we all have a right to use state park lands. But the proposed route, I think, is not a safe option, and I know I like to ski in the park at night as well, and I'm concerned that people could be at risk. So I think a reasonable speed limit should be posted in the park.

I also would wonder if there is another option for the route. It goes up a really nice hill, and one of the things we really like to do when we're cross-country skiing is traverse hills and get up to the top and then get our hearts going and come down the other side. Right where the trail is proposed there's this beautiful little pine burrow, and I would wonder if the trail could just be over to the side a little farther.

And I was looking at the maps, and there are, I guess I would wonder if there aren't other options. We only have one option that you've given us for that trail, and I just wonder if there are other things that we could do, something a little bit farther west that would traverse straight

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north to the direction that the folks on the snowmobiles want to go. So I guess my point is let's share the park, and let it snow. Thanks.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Jim Bolton. [Inaudible].

**JIM BOLTON:** Hi. Thanks for the opportunity and having us here. I am Jim Bolton from Madison, Wisconsin, and I primarily use the park in the winter for cross-country skiing, but I have no problem with snowmobilers. I just don't think they can co-exist everywhere. And I think it's important that we try to have some balance in our resource availability and in our pursuits of quality of life, whatever it means to each one of us. And as others have mentioned, we have [inaudible] of snowmobile trails and a lot less cross-country skiing, and I don't think we need to necessarily encourage sharing the trails. It is a different experience.

In today's world, I think we're wanting everybody to set aside and maintain some truly quiet outdoor opportunities as best we can for those who want to pursue those and still have the other areas for those who like to do snowmobiling and other sports like that. [Inaudible] would say, as was alluded to by others earlier, in these times of extremely tight budgets and particularly for the parks department, this seems like an unneeded new cost to put on the park system for such a small segment that you're going to be adding. And I understand the safety concerns of the snowmobilers, but it seems to me this proposal just creates a new safety problem for the skiers.

I would hope there would be some other option to solve this problem for the snowmobilers without jeopardizing the safety for the skiers. I also wanted to add that it seems to me it's kind of a slap in the face to the Friends, the local Friends for this park. I mean, it's not that long ago that they raised the money for this beautiful warming shelter that is there now for

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those who do come out and ski. And I'm not sure they would have put all that work in if they thought the quiet and solitude of the skiing in this park was going to be jeopardized in a few short years.

And I guess that's mainly, [inaudible] want to say it, but I guess my main point is that I just think we ought to have some balance in our resources and how they're distributed. And I don't think we're lacking in snowmobile trails, but I do think there should be a safe way for them to be accessed where they want to go. But I just hope we could do it outside of the ski area and that we don't have to change the trails and spend money that we don't have to do so. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Callie Caditska(?). Is Callie . . .

**WOMAN:** Nope. I decline.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Okay.

**WOMAN:** I was just [inaudible] up and . . .

**CHRIS MADISON:** Okay. Maggie Steele.

**MAGGIE STEELE:** Thank you for everything here this evening. I live in Brigham Township, and right along our road is a beautifully maintained snowmobile trail. It's not the one that's part of the discussion tonight, but it's only about five miles south of that one. And I do congratulate the people who work on the trails. They do a beautiful job of maintaining them and setting them

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up and taking things down again when the season ends. I've been a little concerned because some people were out already this year on them when we had our snow, and the ground wasn't frozen. And that's sort of my concern about the park too.

I mean, if everybody always does what they should, then everything will be fine. Everybody doesn't. So I guess I want to think of this more in terms of what do we need as opposed to what do we want? I think it would be really nice for the snowmobilers to have that connecting piece to go from several trails to other trails, but that really does impede everyone else's enjoyment of the park. They have mutually exclusive ways to experience being outdoors.

One is quiet and enjoying the quiet of which there is very little nowadays, and the other is making a lot of noise and enjoying the speed in kind of a controlled environment, because you're wearing a helmet, so you're not listening to the birds. You're wearing goggles, so you're not really feeling the air or smelling the exhaust as much, whereas the people who are skiing and snowshoeing do experience all those things, and it directly impedes their enjoyment of the park.

I think there should be some parity, and as someone who's been going to state parks for 60 years, I really am disappointed that the park budget has so decreased that all of our fees have gone up. And it seems to me this is a colossal waste of money, my taxpayer dollars and everyone else's, to fix something that wasn't broken. And I would urge you to reconsider, and, again, thank you to all those snowmobilers who are really excellent stewards. And it's too bad there are some who unfortunately are not. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Mike Clark, and William Van Haren will be up after that.

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**MIKE CLARK:** Thank you. My name is Mike Clark. I live in Madison. I am an avid snowmobiler and mountain biker and cross-country skier. I was one of the, on one of the first crews to build the mountain bike trails out here at the park. And as with snowmobiling, mountain bikers just want more trail as well. Everybody wants more trail. And fortunately in Wisconsin, we have quite a bit of space. I think that putting all of these trails in the same place is not a good idea, and so I would recommend that the connector piece, which is just that connector, just be rerouted elsewhere nearby if it really needs to be that close to the park at all.

There's a map that isn't included on here, and it showed the system of snowmobile trails around the park. And you can see that north of Blue Mound is a bunch of twisty snowmobile trail, and that's the cool, fun stuff. And then you have to have [inaudible] on the trail to actually get you to the next piece of cool stuff. And so to put the connector, which is just a mundane piece, a piece of utility trail to get from one place you want to be to another place you want to be, to put that through a park is a mistake, especially in this case, because it actually affects all the other existing trails for the cross-country skiers and probably for the fat bikers as well.

On other things, I do most of my snowmobiling in the northern part of the state where there's typically more snow more of the time. And because of the large impacts of the proposed snowmobile trail on the other trails, I think that the cost benefit is poor because we're going to impact a lot of these silent sport trails for a trail that will not get used that much for snowmobiles, because as the gentleman said, 20 to 22 days of open trail is good, and that's not that many days, whereas you can get a lot more good skiing days in Blue Mounds with a lot less snow, because it does take quite a bit more snow to keep a snowmobile trail groomed.

I do think that there is a big safety concern for the snowmobilers and skiers on the same trail. That is a problem waiting to happen, because I've spent quite a bit of time on both kinds of



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trails. I also would like the Overlode Trail to remain as it is and not have that taken away. I think that the science of why that needs to go away is not good. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** William Van Haren and then Rick Hendrickson next.

**WILLIAM VAN HAREN:** Good evening. Thanks for a chance to express ourselves tonight. It's great to hear everyone talking about it, and I would say the love for this park is quite incredible. My name is William Van Haren. I have been a resident of the Town of Blue Mounds for about 40 years, and I've been a member of the Blue Mounds, the Friends of Blue Mounds Board for 10 years. And I'm not speaking for the Friends tonight, but I will say that the silent sports community has supported this park in a way that has not happened in any other state park in Wisconsin and probably very few parks in the country in terms of their absolute financial and emotional support for projects in this park to the tune of \$750,000, \$800,000 over the years, not a small number.

So the silent sports community has put their money where their mouth is. That said, I think that we're divided in terms of this snowmobile trail and [inaudible] why they're accommodating our friends and neighbors who like to snowmobile and also our friends and neighbors who are bothered by the noise. Personally, for me, it's not quite such a big issue, but I don't live right next to the park either. So for snowmobiles, that's what I have to say. The Overlode Trail, this is a complete blindside, and it would be a huge loss for the mountain bikers in this park.

I am not a mountain biker, but I am a trail runner, and that's an exceptional piece of trail that really, for its first [inaudible] Walt and his gang, there are some improvements that need to

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be made, but the initial effort has been remarkably stable. The rest of the trails in this park are extreme with difficult mountain biking, and that's sort of an intermediate level. The altitude is difficult, but the terrain is smoother. It's more dirt, less edgy rock. So it's a great draw for this park, and, again, these folks are contributors to the park other than just their entry fees.

So I urge you to look at that again, and, again, my look at the science was I felt it was like someone is looking to close Overlode Trail, and they're looking for the science to back that up. And I think you just need to do better to convince the public that that's the way to go. With the trail, part of Overlode that is remaining is an extremely steep terrain, very much less friendly to the average cyclist, and I think it will hurt park visits. So I'm not in favor of endless park expansion of mountain bike trails. I think we have plenty. And the object [inaudible] concern of the board has been to upgrade the trails that already do exist. Thank you very much.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Rick Hendrickson.

**RICK HENDRICKSON:** I thank you for the chance to speak here tonight. My name is Rick Hendrickson. I'm with Hollandale Snow Drifters Snowmobile Club, and I also ride a lot with the Argyle Ditch Bangers and the Ridgeway trails, many of the other trails in the area, 22,000 miles of Wisconsin trails all put in by volunteers, all put in my snowmobile clubs that just want to have their own piece of Wisconsin as well as other people. The state parks are owned by all of us.

One of the main differences between our trails and a lot of other trails is we put our trails in. Nobody caters for us. Nobody does all of our trails. We do those. There is some funding from the DNR in reimbursement and stuff like that, but the majority, the vast majority, way over 90-plus percent, our individual clubs put in the trails. We take care of the trails. In the event that

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we are having 1.4 miles to the edge of the trail of the state park, I don't see it really being a problem.

You guys have 77-plus miles of trails in there. There's absolutely no reason that a part of the trail couldn't be diverted so that we didn't intertwine with each other. I don't see it being a problem so far, and I don't understand while all of this is really a problem. I used to be a business owner here in Hollandale, Wisconsin. A vast part of my income in the wintertime was when the Barneveld club brought a trail to my bowling alley. When we put in the trail for Blanchardville, [inaudible] the trail back to the runners.

Many of the bars, restaurants, gas stations, everybody down there offered money for trail signage, building the trail, chain saws, gas, regardless. They were willing to help out to see that that trail brought in customers from New Glarus, Monroe, Belleville. There's really no diversion coming across there like there was back in the '70s and '80s. I think that this trail being 1.4 miles on the edge of the state park is not going to cause a lot of grief. We had trails going through the Blue Mound State Park at one time. No one seemed to have a real problem with it at that time.

When all of us take our Sunday drive in the summertime driving around, you know, we don't complain about the truck driver out there making a living. We don't complain about the farmer, you know, their [inaudible] making noise. Nobody pulls them over and complains with them. Snowmobiles and cross-country skiers, snowshoers, walkers, mountain bikers, everybody can get along. I don't really see the need that you've got to be on the same exact trail as opposed to the state paying for a trail. I guarantee you if the state wanted to pull out of paying for that trail, there's a lot of volunteers that are going to come and put in a trail without paying a nickel from the state. Thank you.

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**CHRIS MADISON:** That concludes the appearance slips that I have. Is there anyone who turned in a slip that we did not get?

**PAT TROCHLELL:** I didn't turn it in, but [inaudible]. My name is Pat Trochlell. I am a resident of the area, I live just down the hill from this, and a landowner. I have a very brief statement. I want to mention that I've dealt with parks before, and I can tell you that certain uses in parks are incompatible. And in this case, I would say I'm opposed to construction of the snowmobile trail through the park, because I believe that there are safety and noise incompatibilities with the existing uses.

I also want to say that I do know about the science associated with increased trails and what they will do interior nesting birds and other species and that the snowmobile trail will be wider than, say, the mountain biking trail. And the trail construction and maintenance will increase evasive plant species. It also is, does have a potential to cause negative impacts to the interior nesting bird species through increased nest parasitism and predation, and that could increasingly affect these interior nesting birds. And also there are rare species out there, or plant species that I know of, within that area that could be also adversely impacted by increasing trails and invasive species that would be introduced.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Jeffrey Woodman.

**JEFFREY WOODMAN:** Yes, I would just like to thank everyone for coming and expressing their opinions. I think this is the way it should work and the way we do things in Wisconsin. But as a father of four, some of the best memories that I can remember as far as winter is taking

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my children snowmobiling on the Military Ridge Trail and weave over to Governor Dodge State Park. And my kids are all grown now, but they still remember those good days. And we are still participants in snowmobiling, and I think that the facts are that snowmobiles and skiers and hikers have already proven that safety is, they've been using the Military Ridge Trail all combined, and I don't have the statistics, but I think they've coexisted pretty well.

I'm speaking on my own behalf, but I am a member of the Speedway Snowmobile Club. The facts are that the snowmobiles today are quieter than they ever have been. More people are educated on how to drive them. And I think that the 1.4 miles of usage, most all snowmobilers would consider that a real privilege to be able to use that. And I would like to see the plan go forward with that. And I like to bicycle. I like to do a lot of things, but for the very few days that we get a chance to snowmobile in this area, I don't think that there would be problems. So thank you for your time.

**CHRIS MADISON:** There is one more slip.

**RON HAUGEN:** Hello. I'm Ron Haugen with the County Line Sno Busters, a snowmobile club in the Black Earth and Mazomanie area. We do have a multi-use trail that's hikers and bikers and snowmobiles. In Mazomanie, it's the Wolf Run Trail, and we do not have any problems with safety in that area. The existing trail that's been talked about, when I look at the existing trail right on the road and the new location, it appears that it's about an eighth of a mile change from where it's currently running. So as far as the [inaudible] is concerned, I'm not sure if that makes a difference.

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But also with snowmobiling, [inaudible] trail, but if we do come in contact with other users on the trail, snowmobiles slow down to ten miles an hour as they pass. That's the law. Obviously, maybe not everyone follows that, but snowmobiles will slow down when they're in visible range of other users. And as far as the closing of the Overlode Trail, which a lot of bikers and hikers talk about, it kind of seems like that was a surprise to a lot of people, so I'm not sure how that was communicated. [Inaudible] more, better communication on that, I think, for all of us, would be nice. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** I remind everybody that the record on this remains open for written comments [inaudible] either to the Department through the mail or via e-mail comments, and that, again, closes December 16<sup>th</sup>. Was there anyone else who wanted to speak before we close the hearing?

**MAN:** Yeah.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Can you fill out a slip for us?

**JIM KAUFMAN:** I'm representing the Viking Snowdrifters of Stoughton, Wisconsin. I was listening to the different comments here tonight, and first of all, I guess I'm happy and pleased to see that we already have a snowmobile trail through the park. It looks like a good compromise between different users. It is closer to the roads but hopefully a safe distance away from the snowmobile traffic and car traffic. The trails don't appear to me to be multi-user trails. The

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snowmobile trail appears to be completely separated from any of the ski, snowshoe, and hiking trails.

The only meeting would be where they actually cross much like they cross the roads. I see seven crossings for the quiet sport trails with the road. I only see three with the snowmobile trail. I think that well-signed and controlled snowmobile trail would not impose an excessive danger to anyone doing any of the quiet sports. And we can coexist peacefully in this park together, and all the users can be happily supplied with entertainment in this state park. Thank you.

**CHRIS MADISON:** Jed Downs.

**JED DOWNS:** Yeah, I think we've all been appropriately quiet and respectful in terms of listening to everybody as we speak here. I think we would have had a very different experience in the auditorium if we would have had snowmobiles running back and forth across the back of the hall the whole time we were here trying to carry on a conversation.

People who are used to and enjoy engine noise don't quite understand what the impact, their impact is on those who are out trying to enjoy nature, trying to do things which are going to allow them to, you know, do activities which entertain them that are going to allow them to, you know, hear their grandkids and so forth. Noise is an issue. It's great to be able to get away from it. It's great to be able to escape the city, I am from Madison, to be able to do so. And I just want people to sort of put things in perspective as far as [inaudible], because it is very disruptive to a silent sport enthusiast. Thank you.

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**CHRIS MADISON:** Jeremiah Bennett.

**JEREMIAH BENNETT:** Hi. I'm Jeremiah Bennett from Stoughton Viking Snowdrifters. I've been a snowmobiler all my life. And, you know, I hear a lot of you guys complain about the trail that you're losing. Okay. You know, how does it feel to lose a trail? I know. We've lost trails. We've fought for trails. We're here today to try to bring that back. We've lost our trail for over ten years, you know. All I'm asking is that we have a chance again to try and go through there just like we did in the past.

If there was a lot of conflict back then, we would be hearing it today. I haven't heard any conflict today of past use through the Blue Mound State Park. I have not heard one conflict of one trail through there. So that being said, you know, I understand that you guys could be potentially losing a trail that you're very fond of. Well, we've lost ours for ten years, so we'd just like a chance to get back on that trail and prove to you that we can do it again. And I'd like to just say thank you for your time.

**LISA AUMANN:** Well, I wasn't going to speak tonight, but I guess the last few people kind of got my emotions worked up, so I'll try to be calm about this. But my husband and I moved out to Blue Mounds 13 years ago. We lived in Mount Horeb before that. I grew up in Mazomanie. I'm not opposed to snowmobiling. When we first moved out here, we got a snowmobile. My first time out with, or my husband's first time out on a trail on Military Ridge, we live on Military Ridge. We're backed up to it. I'm used to snowmobile noise. I'm fine with that. But I don't agree with people slow down to ten miles an hour. That doesn't happen.



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I am a runner. I run up in the park. I snowshoe up in the park. I will not go on Military Ridge to get, to go an eighth of a mile to get to the back connection to Blue Mound State Park, because I've been run off the trail. Nobody slows down for me. I have had to dive because for fear of getting hit. The first time out that my husband went out on his snowmobile when we got a snowmobile when we first moved out here, we were all excited about that, he was run off the trail on his snowmobile by another snowmobiler, and they left him there in a ditch.

So I'm not saying you're all like that or that you would all do that, but I'm really concerned about the safety and the slowing down and the fact that a lot of times with snowmobiling there's drifting involved, because it's all hours of the night you're coming into the park. I am concerned for people who are out and about and in the park and skiing at night and stuff like that. I've experienced it myself, and I just felt like I needed to say something.

**CHRIS MADISON:** All right. At this point, that concludes the hearing. I'd like to thank everyone for their attendance tonight and their courteousness. This closes this hearing, but, again, the [inaudible] is open until December 16<sup>th</sup>.